

Listen to Women for A CHANGE

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,
Minnesota Metro Branch,
P. O. Box 14752, Minneapolis, MN 55414, 651-458-7090
<http://www.wilpfn.org>

May - June 2007

EVENTS, EVENTS, EVENTS

ALL-MEMBER RETREAT

(An expense-paid perc for members—friends also!)

Saturday June 30, noon to 4 pm

Party Room, Riverview Tower, 1920 S. First St., Minneapolis
(see directions on page 3)

Catered Greek lunch

Come join us for our annual retreat. Meet with other branch members as we plan for the year beginning in September. What do we want our branch of WILPF to tackle? What will be the topics for Coffee Withs? What is National doing and offering that we should be aware of and perhaps working on? Who is going to the international WILPF meeting in Bolivia?

Come for an afternoon of wonderful food (and drink), conversation, and planning. We'll need RSVPs for this one, to order the lunch (compliments of the branch). So please let us know you can attend by June 20 at the latest. Call our answering service, 651-458-7090, or e-mail us at wilpf@earthlink.net.

U.S. Social Forum

WILPF will have a major role in the first-ever U.S. Social Forum to be held June 27 to July 1 in Atlanta. It will organize the Women's Working Group's World Court of Women, an event that has become a tradition at social fora around the world (search for World Court of Women on web for more info). The DISARM, Advancing Human Rights/ CEDAW, Cuba and Water committees will have a presence as well.

The objective of the Forum is to build relationships, learn from each other's experiences and insights, and develop the consciousness, vision, strategy, and leadership needed to make another, more just world possible. Visit www.ussf2007.org for more information.

Buses for Atlanta are being organized in various cities in the Midwest. For information about buses from the Twin Cities, contact Brandon Lacy Campos, camposvive@hotmail.com, 612-432-7846.



Think Bolivia!

2007 WILPF 29th International Congress
July 21 - 27, 2007

Women unite! Build peace! Generate change!

21 July Evening: Welcome dinner for all participants
26 July: Noon: Closing plenary; Evening: Closing dinner and party
27 July: Departure after breakfast
Afternoon: New and Old Officers' meeting
Price of \$650 per person includes
- Breakfast, lunch dinner, coffee breaks with pastries
- Shared double room, private bathroom at Hotel Camino Real, where meeting will be held
- Use of spa, business center and meeting room
- Transportation to and from airport
(Round trip air fares from US cities to Santa Cruz, Bolivia are running \$800-1400 depending on the departure point.)

U.S. participants must have a visa.
For more information visit ww.wilpf.int.ch

U.S. SECTION NEWS

Letter sent out by Mary Day Kent, Executive Director of U.S. WILPF, with the note: A timely letter making the links between Racial Justice here in the US and a just peace in Palestine-Israel.

Letter to Black America on Palestinian Rights and June 10th March & Rally

On 15 May 2007, 22 Black American professors, writers, religious figures, and other leaders issued a call to Black America to join in the June 10 March and rally, and break the silence on the injustices faced by the Palestinian people.

To Black America:

It is time for our people to once again demand that the silence be broken on the injustices faced by the Palestinian people resulting from the Israeli occupation.

On June 10th, the national coalition known as the **US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation** (endtheoccupation.org) will be spearheading a march and rally to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

We, the signatories of this appeal, ask that Black America again take a leading role in this effort as well as the broader work to bring attention to this 40 year travesty of justice.

United Nations resolutions have called for the Israeli withdrawal, yet the Israeli government, with the backing of the USA, has ignored them. The Israeli government has appropriated Palestinian land in open defiance of international law and overwhelming international condemnation.

Within the US anyone who speaks in favor of Palestinian rights and justice is immediately condemned as being allegedly anti-Israel (and frequently allegedly anti-Semitic), shutting down legitimate discussion. A case in point can be seen in the current furor surrounding former President Jimmy Carter who was criticized for his assertion in his best-selling book, **Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid**, that Israeli obstructionism lies at the root of the failure to achieve a just Palestinian/Israeli settlement. As Nobel prize-winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu has written, "People are scared in the US, to say 'wrong is wrong,' because the pro-Israeli lobby is powerful--very powerful. Well, so what? For goodness sake, this is God's world! We live in a moral universe. The apartheid government was very powerful, but today it no longer exists."

Many of those who most outspokenly agree with

President Carter and Archbishop Desmond Tutu are American Jews. And many American Jews, including the national organization Jewish Voice for Peace, will be among those rallying for Palestinian rights on June 10th - as will many other Americans.

Leaders from Black America have repeatedly and historically been among the most outspoken proponents of justice for the Palestinian people. Our leaders have defended the Palestinian people's right to full self-determination and an end to the Occupation as central to peace in the region. Our leaders have not criticized the Jewish people but they have expressed outrage at the Israeli government that collaborated with the apartheid South African government (including in the development of weapons of mass destruction) and emulated South Africa's treatment of its Black majority in its own treatment of the Palestinian people.

As we struggle to build our country's support for Palestinian human rights, we widen the door for both Arab and Black Americans to deal with the issues that join them together, as well as those that separate them. We will help to energize - and to heal - both communities.

June tenth and Juneteenth: will our struggles lead the way to a new emancipation of others? Our own integrity as a people, let alone our own experience with massive injustice and oppression, demand that we step forward, speak out, and insist on a change in US policy towards the Palestinian people. Since when have an illegally occupied people been wrong in demanding and fighting for their human rights and land? Since when have such people and their cause not been worthy of our support?

Please join us on June 10th!



"MILITARY TRANSFORMATION"

The Philadelphia Branch is very concerned about lack of attention being given to plans for reorientation of the national military forces. The plan involves discarding Cold War-type weapons and strategies in favor of increases in the size of the Army and Marines and advanced equipment specialized for counter-insurgency operations in "underdeveloped" countries. The plan enjoys bipartisan support in Congress. It calls for the addition of 92,000 ground troops over 5 years, and providing these troops with advanced equipment.

Because of the complexity, long-term nature, and magnitude of the implications of this plan, Philadelphia is asking other branches and WILPF leadership

to give the plan early and urgent attention. The expense, and the numbers of people who will die, cannot be tolerated.

Listen to Women for a Change is produced bimonthly by the Steering Committee of MN Metro WILPF. Submissions from members are welcome. Please e-mail to alteravista@earthlink.net or mail to 1233 Ingerson Road, St. Paul 55112. Next issue is July-August. Deadline for submissions: July 10. Editor: Leslie Reindl

BRANCH NEWS

Coffee Withs

The MN Metro branch concluded its very successful series of Coffee Withs in May with a presentation entitled "Empire 101." Our guest was Prof. Richard Martinez of the University of Minnesota, who teaches courses on immigration and sociology. Richard began working at the U in 2005, after receiving his PhD at UCLA.

Richard informed us that he had been the usual party-line student until he began hanging out with people with dissenting views on Wilshire Blvd in California. Then he began study and research on "real" history. He had the idea for his Empire 101 class while still a student.

At the university he has found a group of like-minded teachers but all are cautious about voicing their opinions. Richard decided he had to do something, had to contribute to the anti-war movement somehow. He decided to offer his talents at research and teaching in a free history class. He was new to the Twin Cities and had to scout out a free place for the class and then try to attract interested people.

He did and he did. About 20 people met for ten weeks in a collective learning environment. The students decided what they wanted to learn, and Richard did research, especially looking at declassified materials about those subjects, which most people never see. The class learned a great deal about how the British Empire was acquired, and about reasons for the Korean War, among other subjects.

Hopefully Richard will offer another class in the fall, for another group. Proposed subjects at the Coffee With were the Spanish American War and the First and Second World Wars. What have we learned that is not true; what don't we know that is?

More Details About Retreat

Our annual social retreat pools ideas and plans for the year beginning next September:

- What are our priorities for advancing peace and social justice in this time and place?
- How can our Branch best reach out to others with our hopes and dreams?
- What are the specific tasks our Branch is best equipped to tackle?
- What will be the topics for our "Coffee With" presentations and discussions?
- How can we best engage with National WILPF for mutual assistance?
- Who will be going to the international WILPF meeting in Bolivia?

Directions to the building:

The Riverview Tower (24 stories: address 1920 S. 1st St.) is just east of 7 Corners, just north of the U of M West Bank Humphrey Institute and Law School; just beyond Gramma's eatery. On 19th Street just beyond the Law School you turn in on 2nd. St. down the short curved entry facing the Tower. Some guest parking to your left (register car in building entry) and street parking down the hill to the River.

The World Says No to Israeli Occupation

Minnesota Metro WILPF has endorsed the events connected with the campaign "The World Says No to Israeli Occupation," culminating in a protest in Washington, DC on June 10, the 40th anniversary of Israel's illegal military occupation of the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, and Syrian Golan Heights. The following are local events:

Wednesday, June 6. Weekly vigil at the Marshall Av.- Lake Street Bridge to end the occupation of Iraq will include a focus on ending the occupation of Palestine. 5-6 p.m. Info: 651-696-1642

Friday, June 8 (and every Friday) 4:15-5:30 pm: vigil to end the occupation of Palestine. Snelling & Summit Avenues, St. Paul

Friday, June 8, 6:00-8:00pm. Life Under Occupation: Reflections on Palestine. Macalester-Plymouth Church, Macalester St. at Lincoln Ave., St. Paul. A participatory event with Middle Eastern food and opportunities to hear firsthand accounts about life under occupation and meet with local activists who are trying to bring peace with justice to Palestine and Israel.

Saturday, June 9. Coffee 9:30 am, program 10-11:30 am, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 41st and Lyndale S., Minneapolis. Israel's Occupation of Palestinians: Isn't 40 Years Enough? Exploration of the four decades since the June 1967 war via two perspectives: Omar Tesdell, Palestinian American; Karen Redleaf, Jewish-American.

Programs sponsored by Palestine Solidarity Project; co-sponsors include WAMM Mideast Committee, Middle East Peace Now. Numerous endorsers include Churches for Middle East Peace, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Coalition for Palestinian Rights, MN Metro Branch of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

All events free. Info: Florence 651-696-1642.

Actions Against the Iraq Occupation

Yesterday Congress gave the Administration the requested funds for more occupation in Iraq, no strings attached. And there was no requirement that lawmakers have the final decision about any war against Iran. In the wake of this action in Congress, the next several months will be crucial.

Republicans and Democrats have said that they will assess the war in September. The next round of funding will be up for consideration in September. And September will be one of the last opportunities to hammer out a plan to end the war before the 2008 presidential election heats up.

Many organizations are planning direct nonviolent actions between now and September 21, the International Day of Peace. Please watch for opportunities to join these actions. If you are on the Internet, you may wish to sign up for a daily calendar announcing peace events, at shove001@tc.umn.edu. A monthly calendar is put out by Charley Underwood--sign up for that one at charleyunderwood@hotmail.com.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU GROW

By Michael Pollan, Author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*

A few years ago, an obesity researcher at the University of Washington named Adam Drewnowski ventured into the supermarket to solve a mystery. He wanted to figure out why the most reliable predictor of obesity in America today is a person's wealth. For most of history, after all, the poor have typically suffered from a shortage of calories, not a surfeit. So how is it that today the people with the least amount of money to spend on food are the ones most likely to be overweight?

Drewnowski gave himself a hypothetical dollar to spend, to purchase as many calories as he possibly could. He discovered that he could buy the most calories/ dollar in the middle aisles of the supermarket, among the towering canyons of processed food and soft drink. (In the typical American supermarket, the fresh foods — dairy, meat, fish and produce — line the perimeter walls, while the imperishable packaged goods dominate the center.) Drewnowski found that a dollar could buy 1,200 calories of cookies or potato chips but only 250 calories of carrots. Looking for something to wash down those chips, he discovered that his dollar bought 875 calories of soda but only 170 calories of orange juice.

... Drewnowski concluded that the rules of the food game in America are organized in such a way that if you are eating on a budget, the most rational economic strategy is to eat badly — and get fat.

This perverse state of affairs is not, as you might think, the inevitable result of the free market. Compared with a bunch of carrots, a package of Twinkies, to take one iconic processed foodlike substance as an example, is a highly complicated, high-tech piece of manufacture, involving no fewer than 39 ingredients, many themselves elaborately manufactured, as well as the packaging and a hefty marketing budget. So how can the supermarket possibly sell a pair of these synthetic cream-filled pseudocakes for less than a bunch of roots?

For the answer, you need look no farther than the farm bill. This resolutely unglamorous and head-hurtingly complicated piece of legislation, which comes around roughly every five years and is about to do so again, sets the rules for the American food system — indeed, to a considerable extent, for the world's food system. Among other things, it determines which crops will be subsidized and which will not, and in the case of the carrot and the Twinkie, offers a lot more support to the cake than to the root. Like most processed foods, the Twinkie is basically a clever arrangement of carbohydrates and fats teased out of corn, soybeans and wheat — three of the five commodity crops that the farm bill supports, to the tune of some \$25 billion a year. (Rice and cotton are the others.) For the last several decades ... U.S. agricultural policy has been designed in such a way as to promote the overproduction of these five commodities, especially corn and soy.

That's because the current farm bill helps commodity farmers by cutting them a check based on how many bushels they can grow, rather than, say, by supporting prices and limiting production, as farm bills once did. The result? A food system awash in added sugars (derived from corn) and added fats (derived mainly from soy), as well as dirt-cheap meat and milk (derived from both). By comparison, the farm bill does

almost nothing to support farmers growing fresh produce. A result of these policy choices is on stark display in your supermarket, where the real price of fruits and vegetables between 1985 and 2000 increased by nearly 40% while the real price of soft drinks (aka liquid corn) declined by 23%. The reason the least healthful calories in the supermarket are the cheapest is that those are the ones the farm bill encourages farmers to grow.

... [T]he subsidies are only part of the problem. The farm bill helps determine what sort of food your children will have for lunch in school tomorrow. The school-lunch program began at a time when the public-health problem of America's children was undernourishment, so feeding surplus agricultural commodities to kids seemed like a win-win strategy. Today the problem is overnutrition, but a school lunch lady trying to prepare healthful fresh food is apt to get dinged by USDA inspectors for failing to serve enough calories; if she dishes up a lunch that includes chicken nuggets and Tater Tots, however, the inspector smiles and the reimbursements flow. The farm bill essentially treats our children as a human Disposal for all the unhealthful calories that the farm bill has encouraged American farmers to overproduce.

To speak of the farm bill's influence on the American food system does not begin to describe its full impact — on the environment, on global poverty, even on immigration. By making it possible for American farmers to sell their crops abroad for considerably less than it costs to grow them, the farm bill helps determine the price of corn in Mexico and the price of cotton in Nigeria and therefore whether farmers in those places will survive or be forced off the land, to migrate to the cities — or to the United States. ... You can't fully comprehend the pressures driving immigration without comprehending what U.S. agricultural policy is doing to rural agriculture in Mexico.

And though we don't ordinarily think of the farm bill in these terms, few pieces of legislation have as profound an impact on the American landscape and environment. Americans may tell themselves they don't have a national land-use policy, that the market by and large decides what happens on private property in America, but that's not exactly true. The smorgasbord of incentives and disincentives built into the farm bill helps decide what happens on nearly half of the private land in America: whether it will be farmed or left wild, whether it will be managed to maximize productivity (and therefore doused with chemicals) or to promote environmental stewardship. The health of the American soil, the purity of its water, the biodiversity and the very look of its landscape owe in no small part to impenetrable titles, programs and formulae buried deep in the farm bill.

Given all this, you would think the farm-bill debate would engage the nation's political passions every five years, but that hasn't been the case. If the quintennial antidrama of the "farm bill debate" holds true to form this year, a handful of farm-state legislators will thrash out the mind-numbing details behind closed doors, with virtually nobody else, either in Congress or in the media, paying much attention. ...

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Make the Nestle Connection

In the Winter 2007 packet of information from national WILPF was a sheet dated February 14 calling for giving Fair Trade chocolates for Valentine's Day and not buying Nestle chocolate until Nestle buys fair trade.

Nestle SA, based in Vevey, Switzerland, is the world's largest food/beverage company. According to information on the sheet, Nestle is a leading exporter of cocoa from Ivory Coast., and has been implicated in ongoing abuse and torture of child cocoa laborers in that country. Nestle USA committed to ending child labor on cocoa farms by July 2005, but little has been accomplished. And Nestle refuses to source any portion of its cocoa from the only farms that do not employ abusive child labor--those that are Fair Trade Certified.

Although we don't hear much anymore about INFACt's (now Corporate Accountability International) Nestle baby formula boycott, it is still ongoing (see www.babymilkaction.org). And today Nestle has a great many more strikes against it, a major one being its production and promotion of bottled water.

"We sell water, so we have to be clever" said Jeff Caso, former Nestle senior vice president for marketing/sales/ communications. What can be more clever than flooding the market with 11-oz. rocket-shaped bottles of water called Aquapod, aimed at 6- to 12-year-olds, with the slogan "A blast of fun"?

Nestle produces more than 75 brands of bottled water in over 33 countries. Nestle Waters North America has bought up many local brands and created new ones. Its labels feature beautiful mountains and springs. Some brands are Arrowhead and Calistoga (CA), Deer Park (PA and FL), Ice Mountain (MI), Ozarka (TX), Poland Spring (ME) and Zephyrhills (FL).

Nestle is very active in Michigan, which has been called the Saudi Arabia of fresh water. The Great Lakes basin contains almost a quarter of the world's freshwater resources. Water activists in Michigan, such as the Sweetwater Alliance, are fighting on all fronts.

Nestle recently received permission to drill a well near Evart, MI, to extract 216,000 gallons of spring water every day. This particular water comes from the

headwaters of two trout streams and will decrease the flow of the Muskegon River by 70 million gallons annually. The Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality based its decision solely on information from Nestle.

Nestle bottled 226 million gallons of water at its Ice Mountain facility in Stanwood (western MI) last year. This facility is especially controversial, because it takes water from what is known as Sanctuary Springs. There is an ongoing court battle over Stanwood.

A recent e-mail sent to the Twin Cities Water Coalition from a woman in Michigan detailed how Sweetwater activists have been harassed recently. Some of these activists had been questioned 3 years ago by the FBI in connection with an "incendiary device" said to have been found in an outbuilding at or near the Ice Mountain bottling plant in Stanwood. Some were pressured to give up DNA samples for a Grand Jury investigation. Then nothing further was heard. Nestle continued to pump water despite losing in the courts against Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation.

Recently ten FBI agents raided the home of one activist in a 5-hour search, and visited the home of another. Sweetwater people are convinced they are being harassed for their stand against Nestle and the privatization of a resource belonging to the people.

Great Lakes Compact

The Great Lakes Water Resources Compact, signed in December 2005 by governors of the eight states bordering the Great Lakes, and representatives of the two Canadian provinces involved, prohibits the transfer of water out of the Great Lakes basin. It derives from a decade-long collaborative effort to develop uniform laws regulating water use in the basin.

Sources of fresh water are now under great threat, and the Great Lakes, holding about 20% of the world's surface fresh water supply, are being eyed from all sides. Proposals for using the water have ranged from feeding a coal-slurry pipeline in Wyoming to replenishing the Ogallala aquifer stretching from the Dakotas to Texas, to shipping it in tankers to Asia.

The Compact prohibits all new or increased diversions of water, but makes an exception for communities lying on the watershed boundary.

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Minnesota Metro WILPF, P.O. Box 14752, Minneapolis, MN 55414, 651-458-7090, www.wilpfn.org

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New Member _____ Renewing member _____ Making a donation _____

Level of support: Family \$50 _____ MN Metro membership \$35 _____ (\$15 low income) _____

(For membership make check payable to MN Metro WILPF; for donation make payable to JAPA)

U.S. Section membership \$35 _____ (\$15 low income) _____ Subscription to WILPF International \$15 _____

(Make check payable to WILPF, mail to MN Metro)

You Are What You Grow *continued from p. 4*

But there are signs this year will be different. The public-health community has come to recognize it can't hope to address obesity and diabetes without addressing the farm bill. The environmental community recognizes that as long as we have a farm bill that promotes chemical and feedlot agriculture, clean water will remain a pipe dream. The development community has woken up to the fact that global poverty can't be fought without confronting the ways the farm bill depresses world crop prices. ...

And then there are the eaters, people like you and me, increasingly concerned, if not restive, about the quality of the food on offer in America. A grassroots social movement is gathering around food issues today, and while it is still somewhat inchoate, the manifestations are everywhere: in local efforts to get vending machines out of the schools and to improve school lunch; in local campaigns to fight feedlots and to force food companies to better the lives of animals in agriculture; in the spectacular growth of the market for organic food and the revival of local food systems. In great and growing numbers, people are voting with their forks for a different sort of food system. But as powerful as the food consumer is — it was that consumer, after all, who built a \$15 billion organic-food industry and more than doubled the number of farmer's markets in the last few years — voting with our forks can advance reform only so far. It can't, for example, change the fact that the system is rigged to make the most unhealthful calories in the marketplace the only ones the poor can afford. To change that, people will have to vote with their votes as well — which is to say, they will have to wade into the muddy political waters of agricultural policy.

Doing so starts with the recognition that the "farm bill" is a misnomer; in truth, it is a food bill and so needs to be rewritten with the interests of eaters placed first.

...

The devil is in the details, no doubt. Simply eliminating support for farmers won't solve these problems; overproduction has afflicted agriculture since long before modern subsidies. It will take some imaginative policy making to figure out how to encourage farmers to focus on taking care of the land rather than all-out production, on growing real food for eaters rather than industrial raw materials for food processors and on rebuilding local food economies, which the current farm bill hobbles. But the guiding principle behind an eater's farm bill could not be more straightforward: it's one that changes the rules of the game so as to promote the

quality of our food (and farming) over and above its quantity.

Such changes are radical only by the standards of past farm bills, which have faithfully reflected the priorities of the agribusiness interests that wrote them. One of these years, the eaters of America are going to demand a place at the table, and we will have the political debate over food policy we need and deserve. This could prove to be that year: the year when the farm bill became a food bill, and the eaters at last had their say.

Michael Pollan, a contributing writer, is the Knight professor of journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. His most recent book is "The Omnivore's Dilemma."

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Let Congress know you want a farm bill that supports family farmers, not agribusiness, ensures humane treatment of farm animals, and helps farmers be good stewards of their land.

* * * * *

Nestle *continued from page 5*

And it has a larger loophole--an exemption for diversions that are used to manufacture or produce a finished product. Under this exemption, water bottling companies can extract water from any of the lakes and package it for human consumption, provided that the containers they use are 5.7 gallons (20 liters) or smaller in size. This exemption will allow building a proposed bottled water plant north of Grand Rapids, MI, to withdraw nearly 80 million gallons each year for sale outside the basin.

How did this exemption get into the Compact? Through lobbying by the three major bottled water companies--Nestle, Coca Cola, and PepsiCo (Danone was bought up by Coca Cola) and the International Bottled Water Association.

The exemption opens up the agreement to the rules of the North American Free Trade Agreement, rules that can trump the standards and measures outlined in the Compact. Once a commodity enters international trade, the rules of NAFTA supersede local rules.

The Great Lakes Compact has to be ratified by all eight states that are party to it, and thereafter has to be submitted to Congress for approval. Minnesota was the first state to sign on, in March 2007.

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